

**MUSIC**

**DUXBURY HISTORY FILE  
REFERENCE**

# Plymouth orchestra triumphs

## Duxbury oboist plays along

By Robert Knox  
MPG Newspapers

PLYMOUTH — The storms of early April gave way to a triumphant spring concert by the Plymouth Philharmonic Orchestra Saturday night at Memorial Hall. The orchestra concluded its perennially too-short season with a brilliantly sustained performance of one of the repertoire's all-time favorites, the still "miraculous" Fifth Symphony by Beethoven, replenishing the internal fortitude of concertgoers just in time for a rainy journey home. With so many damp pilgrims, can May flowers be far behind?

Hope, optimism, beauty, radiance, spiritual challenge and eventual triumph were the themes of a thoroughly springlike program that included a high-spirited Rossini overture, the nostalgic beauty of Vaughan Williams' oboe concerto, and the Romantic triumph of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 in C Minor. It was a combination built along traditional lines: overture, concerto, symphony. The philharmonic's performance milked the inherent power in that sturdy format, beginning with a work of bright and charming surfaces, gaining momentum with a lyrical, more inward piece before turning to the power game of the great Romantic breakthrough. It was a concert that seemed to say you can cut away the chaff of the everyday, the radio music of reality, and recover the original power of great songs boldly sung.

Music director Steven Kari-doyanes told listeners at his pre-concert talk that after the April Fool's Day snowstorm claimed one of the philharmonic's four rehearsal days, the "urgency" they were about to hear in the Fifth Symphony would be the orchestra's efforts to catch up. In fact the musicians played the work as if it were an old friend.

Rossini's overture to his opera

operas he'd written earlier in his career. It's a bright, cheerful, serviceable work, that gets everybody in the orchestra involved, ranging in tone from frothy, to amorous to brassily triumphant, the kind of work a contemporary audience might think of as a cartoon rouser. The orchestra hit its mark without hesitation, playing the boldly stated work with flair and panache and a palpable sense of enjoyment. There's lots to do: pizzicato, percussion work, solo woods, flutes, vigorous bowing. Seen from the point of view of the structure of a whole program, the overture is a kind of opening movement for the listener's ear, a mood ring for the entire concert. This overture suggests bright colors and a triumphant endings.

Ralph Vaughan Williams' Concerto for Oboe and Strings was written in the 1940s, a dark time for England, but sounds like the 1840s. A kind of patron saint of English composition, Vaughan Williams succeeded in finding a classical, orchestral realization for the English folk music tradition. The oboe concerto is unabashedly pastoral, redolent of Constable's hay wains, Keats' odes, Dowland's lute players, Shakespeare's romantic comedies. Guest oboist Wayne Rapier of Duxbury told concertgoers that in writing the concerto, the composer began with a theme he had written earlier and originally intended to be part of a symphony, a theme that "looks back to a more idealistic time." It goes from pastoral (the first movement is described as "rondo pastorale") to gentle to yearning; it's the music for the day after the April rain when the sun comes out.

Rapier's oboe was gentle and birdlike. The solo part has a fluttery, swooping quality that reminds you of the famous violin solo in *A Lark Ascending*. You think of birds, butterflies, unburdened hearts, virtuoso flight, ascent and descent. A brief cheerful second movement is followed by a bright, wilder finale, with dizzying strings, staccato and bouncier rhythms, percussive passions, chirping voices, a deep

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**Oboist** Wayne Rapier of Duxbury performed Saturday at the Plymouth Philharmonic Orchestra's final concert of the season.

birdlike solo, beautifully played by Rapier.

Relentlessness can have its darker side, but you don't sense the devil is ever in charge of the dynamic in Beethoven's Fifth. It pounds like the excited heart, but the heart knows its object and rises to each challenge on its journey. Long before the internal combustion engine, Beethoven invented overdrive for his relentlessly aspiring, pulsating fifth symphony. The work seems the paradigm example of the term "narrative drive." It hits the ground running and never lets up.

If it were a book it would be the thriller you can't put down, if it were on stage it would be as inevitable as Sophocles, if it were on film it would be the chariot race in *Ben Hur*. It's Babe Ruth pointing to the bleachers before a homerun, Hillary climbing his Everest, Winston Churchill winding up a peroration, a drum solo by Ginger Baker or Elvin Jones, Bill Weld on the trail of a welfare cheat, Groucho Marx in pursuit of a gag, Hitchcock ratcheting the tension up yet another notch when the murderer, or fate, or the denouement, is on the scene.

The triple-knotted coherence of the symphony comes from the composer's elaboration from the classical form of the symphony he inherited from Haydn and Mozart, Karidoyanes told listeners. The third (*Eroica*) was the first of his symphonies to break the rules in the direction that came to be known as Romantic. The fifth is even longer, it weaves the famous four-note opening motif throughout all four movements, and it provides a psychological progression to the satisfying finale in which all questions are resolved and all challenges met. Beethoven further emphasizes the turn to the final movement by omitting the rest, but bringing in instruments which have not sounded in the previous three movements, two trombones, a piccolo and a contrabassoon, to heighten the affirmation by extending the range.

The orchestra's work was balanced and sure throughout. The sections share the limelight, the stirring strings giving way to deep basses, to solo horns, to the rumble of kettle drums, to solo oboe, as every instrument gets its turn to speak the speech. Has any other work ever said the same thing so many ways, so many different ways, and still kept our ears glued to the saying? Changes of pace, dynamics and voicings were neatly fielded by the musicians. The end comes sooner than we think and is yet inevitable. This is the music of western history, or that time in our history when we still believed in progress. The orchestra played like it believed in itself.

The audience stood and applauded and walked out into the rain with a fortified heart, natural optimism restored, and the certainty of having got about as much out of life as any two hours is likely to offer. In the end optimistic works of art celebrate the creative power of art itself. The music is its own theme. Creative works of art are not enough by themselves to solve all our problems, but they will keep us going for a while.

## Plymouth Philharmonic Orchestra

The Symphony Orchestra of Southeastern Massachusetts

STEVEN KARIDOYANES, Music Director

presents a

# Spring Concert

Saturday, April 12, 1997 8:00 p.m.  
Memorial Hall, Plymouth

WAYNE RAPIER, oboe  
STEVEN KARIDOYANES, conducting

ROSSINI  
Overture to *Semiramide*  
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS  
Concerto for Oboe and Strings  
BEETHOVEN  
Symphony No. 5



WAYNE RAPIER



**Tickets:** \$11, \$13, \$16, \$18 (\$3 discount for seniors & youth) - Available at Snow Goose Shop (Plymouth), The Studio (Duxbury), Noble's Camera Shop (Kingston), Hub Music Shop (Pembroke) or by calling (508) 746-8008. Student "rush" tickets @ \$5 each available at the box office one hour before performance.

Mr. Rapier's appearance is made possible with generous support from the Samuel C. Endicott Fund.

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